

History

More than ten years of work on the part of law enforcement officers across Iowa culminated in 1967 with the passage of what is now Iowa Code chapter 80B. This legislative act, signed into law by Governor Harold Hughes, created the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy and Council and required the initial and continued training of all law enforcement officers in this state.

In addition to maximizing training opportunities and upgrading law enforcement to a professional status, the Academy is charged in chapter 80B with the responsibility for setting standards, regulating the law enforcement service, granting law enforcement officer certification to those person successfully completing training, and with decertifying officers in appropriate circumstances. Minimum standards for the appointment of law enforcement officers developed under this authority have been in effect since December 10, 1968.

The academy was originally placed under the Department of Public Safety and functioned there for three years. In 1970 the legislature made the Academy an autonomous department and placed it administratively under the office of the Governor. The Director of the Academy is appointed by and reports directly to the Governor. The Governor appoints members of the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy Council for four-year terms. Four Directors have served the Academy since its inception: John F. Callaghan, 1968-1983; Ben Yarrington, 1983-1993; Gene W. Shepard, 1993- 2002; and E.A. “Penny” Westfall, 2002 to present.

The Iowa National Guard initially provided accommodations for the Academy’s operations. Thereafter, through the cooperation of the Guard, the Governor and the legislature, an Act of Congress provided for the transfer of land on Camp Dodge to the Academy. Public Law 90-444, 90th Congress, S. 3495, passed July 30, 1968, authorized the Secretary of the Army to modify on behalf of the United States the land use restriction under which land had been conveyed to the State of Iowa for military use. The modification allowed up to nine acres that could be used by the State “for law enforcement academy purposes.” The Academy continues to enjoy and deeply appreciates an excellent working relationship with the Iowa National Guard and the Adjutant General of the State of Iowa.

Governor Robert D. Ray dedicated the First Academy building in 1969. This building is now the administrative wing of the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy. The classroom and dormitory building was completed in 1974 and contains a cafeteria, four classrooms, a library and a 112-bed dormitory.

The first basic training school was graduated in July 1968 under the guidance of the founding director of the Academy, the late John F. Callaghan.

The first basic training schools were 160 hours, four weeks in length. In 1972 basic training schools were increased to 240 hours, six weeks. In 1978 the basic training schools were increased to 400 hours, ten weeks. In January 1996 the basic training schools were increased to 480 hours in twelve weeks. Currently the basic training schools are 544 hours in length lasting thirteen weeks. The Academy normally conducts six basic training schools each fiscal year. The Academy is able to handle the training needs without any waiting lists.